

# ORGANIC ACCREDITATION

## Background

The Falkland Islands has a very extensive rangeland grazing system, often involving the use of little or no artificial inputs as they are difficult and expensive to freight here. Many of the farms basically use organic production systems for these pragmatic reasons, also some may also do it for ethical reasons. Whatever the case unless these businesses are audited and certificated, it is difficult to market such products as organic and achieve the premium they deserve.

The Falkland Island Government, through DOA, has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) to use their Australian Certified Organic (ACO) standards. These standards are available on line or in hard copy from DOA. [www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au)



Even though the products will be certified with Australian standards, these are recognised internationally for export, and the product is still very much a Falkland Island product.

## In Conversion

Farm businesses apply (we can help you with this) and fill out some background information. The business then needs to develop an Organic Management Plan. This plan details how the farm will run, what is allowable and not and needs to be based upon the ACO Standards. It is not onerous and once again we can help and provide a template etc. Annual audits by ACO accredited auditors (DOA) are done and after three years the farm is fully accredited.

## Accredited Farms

Accredited farms should be able to sell fully accredited organic wool or meat for export. It is hoped that the current premiums for such products will remain or increase over time making the effort a profitable one.

## Costs

Costs by the BFA are set in Australian Dollars so vary with exchange rates but are approximately

- One off application fee £250
- Annual fee of £120
- A levy of 1% of the sale of organic produce.

These costs are very competitive with other schemes around the world offering similar accreditation.

Of course if you are considering organic systems there may also be a cost in foregoing the use of some products like fertilizers or drenches, and a list of allowable inputs can be found in the Standards. We are also happy to help people to evaluate the loss of such inputs or to manage flocks or herds in such a way to minimise effects from issues like internal parasites. The use of some trace elements and vaccines is allowable in consultation with DOA.

### **Outlook for Organics**

The Organic food industry is the fastest growing food sector in the world economy and it is often hard to source organic meat products on the world market. Organic clothing is also growing rapidly with cotton, silk, hemp, linen and of course wool being natural fibres and the added appeal of also being organic is attracting a lot of major buyers.

People are interested in organic products for a number of reasons and are often prepared to pay a premium to get them with enough of a premium to flow down to the supplier of the raw product.

Organic products have received premiums of between 0-30% for the comparable quality of non organic product. Whilst premiums are notoriously hard to predict a level of 10-15% would make organics quite a profitable method of value adding agricultural products in the Falkland Islands.

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